



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at the Park and Recreation Administrative Office Building, located at 5841 Brookshire Blvd., Charlotte, NC on May 14, 2019 at 6 p.m.

PRC MINUTES May 14, 2019

ATTENDANCE

PRC Present: Heidi Pruess, Chair
Rick Winiker, Vice-Chair
Peter Engels, Executive Secretary
Sterling Martin
Brian Cox
Doug Burnett
Paul Freestone
Ann Harrison
Mark Loflin
Alesha Brown
Blanche Penn

PRC Absent: Rufus Kearney
Sandy Barnett

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Chair, Heidi Pruess, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Welcome and Introductions:

Chair, Heidi Pruess, welcomed all to the May 14, 2019 Park and Recreation Commission meeting. Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.

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New Staff Introduction: Jason Tryon, new Community and Recreation Center Services Superintendent, was introduced. Jason returns to Mecklenburg County after serving as the Director of the Indian Trail Parks and Recreation Department.

Guest: Douglas Walton, Planning Commission and president of the Madison Park Home Owners Association.

Public Appearance – Special Presentations

Naming Application – Jerry and Irene Blackmon Bridge and Trails: Director Jones shared a naming application submitted by Commissioner Harden to name the pedestrian bridge connecting Little Sugar Creek Greenway with the Queens Sports Complex at Marion Diehl Park to “Jerry and Irene Blackmon Bridge and Trails”. Director Jones said the application had been approved by the South Region Advisory Council and asked for endorsement from the PRC.

Motion was made by Commissioner Winiker to approve the naming application, submitted by Board of County Commissioner, Susan Harden, to name the pedestrian bridge connecting Little Sugar Creek Greenway with the Queens Sports Complex at Marion Diehl Park to “Jerry and Irene Blackmon Bridge and Trails”, which was seconded by Commissioner Martin and approved unanimously.

The application can be viewed here: [Jerry and Irene Blackmon Bridge and Trails](#)

Awards and Recognition

PRC Recognition Program – Commissioner Blanche Penn: Commissioner Penn shared an idea for a PRC award program: *PRC Champion for our Community Award Program*. This suggested award program would be a recognition from the Park and Recreation Commission for either P&R staff or community members who support and uphold those qualities and actions that make our park system great.

Discussion followed which revealed PRC support of the suggested recognition program. Director Jones asked that the PRC take a closer look at the suggested program and return with more detail and asked that they keep in mind the recognition programs currently in place by the Department. Commissioners Winiker, Brown and Burnett agreed to work with Commissioner Penn on more detail to the suggested plan and bring it back to a future PRC meeting.

Standing AC Reports and Appointments

Aquatics: Commissioner Cox: The Aquatics Advisory Council attended the Eastway Regional Recreation Center Design meeting on April 25. No further report.

Athletics: Commissioner Martin: No Report

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Cooperative Extension: Commissioner Harrison: Next meeting, June 19. No Report

Central: Commissioner Engels: Next meeting is Monday, May 20 at 6 p.m. at Dowd House. No Report

Golf: Commissioner Loflin: Next meeting is May 21 at 1 p.m. at Dr. Charles Sifford Golf Course. No Report

Greenways: Commissioner Freestone: Greg Clemmer, Division Director of Park Operations, attended the Greenway AC meeting and discussed safety. 1.2% of crime in the County occurs in parks and on greenways with 11% of that 1.2% occurring on greenways. The Advisory Council would like to revisit the UNCC report on crime on greenways. Discussion also held regarding contractors.

Director Jones noted that Greg Clemmer works closely with CMPD so that we can determine where we need added support to minimize crime.

North: Commissioner Penn: No Report

South: Commissioner Burnett: The South Advisory Council last met at Col. Francis Beatty Park. Director Jones attended the meeting.

Sr. Citizen: Commissioner Winiker: The Advisory Council has not met but are looking to schedule a Saturday morning meeting in June.

Stewardship: Commissioner Pruess: The report is included in the agenda packet and can be viewed here: [Stewardship AC Report of April 10, 2019](#) The Stewardship Advisory Council is putting together information to share as it relates to work in North, Central and South. Once that information is determined they will ask to be included on the agenda for a future North, Central and South Advisory Council meeting.

Several of the Stewardship AC members have served several terms and discussion resulted in the agreement that it is time to bring on new members and get others from the community involved. Those rolling off the council were recognized at the recent Stewardship AC meeting.

PRC Chair Report

Advisory Council Members: Chair Pruess reminded the board that many of our Advisory Council members will be completing their terms in June, creating several vacancies. As a result, and to facilitate recruitment, Chair Pruess shared a flyer that was designed by Commissioner Harrison, with staff input, to assist with sharing information about our Advisory Councils. The Board was encouraged to use this flyer as they look for potential new members. This flyer can be viewed here: [Advisory Council Flyer](#)

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The PRC were reminded that AC members are eligible to serve two full 3-year terms, however, the PRC can reappoint beyond those terms. Considering this, Chair Pruess encourage the Advisory Council Chairs to make sure their Advisory Councils have current, approved by-laws.

PRC Nominating Committee: A nominating committee was appointed, consisting of Commissioners Penn, Cox and Martin, to bring before the PRC at the June 11, 2019 PRC meeting a slate of PRC officer nominees for appointment consideration.

Director's Report

Waymer Center Update: Bert Lynn, Division Director of Capital Planning Services, gave an update on the Waymer Center and included the following:

- All bids have been opened and came in within range with one alternate to upfit two classrooms at the back of the building. MWSBE (Minorities, Women, Small Business Enterprise program) participation is poor at 1%. The goal of the County is to reach 6% in each category or 18% total. Asset and Facility Management is going to work with the contractor to improve participation numbers before going to the BOCC in June.
- The project is scheduled to be complete and open by February or March of 2020.
- Two years ago, the project had a budget of 1.3 million but was increased an additional 1.3 million to renovate, upfit, manage original construction problems and bring the building back to its original grandeur.
- Questions from the public regarding the project can be directed to Bert Lynn, Division Director of Capital Planning Services.

Budget Update: Director Jones gave an update on the FY2020 Budget.

- The Budget office presented the budget today at the public policy meeting.
- Questions from the BOCC regarding the Park and Recreation Departments Budget:
 - GEO Equity of the greenway program
 - Director Jones said that the Master Plan includes 300 miles of Greenway, but connectivity is critical. Small stretches that go nowhere are not feasible to the overall goal.
 - Accelerated greenway program
 - To get 30 miles of greenway completed by 2023
 - Strategy is to include greenway projects in design and construction, move remaining projects forward and initiate new projects
 - The current average cost is 1.7 million per mile
 - More information on the accelerated greenway program will be provided at the June 11 PRC meeting.
 - Adequate programming, especially for seniors and our special needs population.

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- Scholarship opportunities
- Safety and security issues
 - Several additional positions are included in the budget to enhance the number of park rangers
- Additional funding of 3.9 million for other projects and 4.9 million for deferred maintenance
- Staffing enhancement to get the Department back to 2008/2009 staffing levels
 - Chair Pruess would like to be kept informed of the effectiveness and success realized by additional staffing
 - The Department is faced with many challenges as the public demands more from Park and Recreation. More staffing is required to meet those demands.

Director Jones thanked the PRC for their advocacy and participation in the BOCC Environmental Stewardship Committee that aided in the enhancement of several budget requests.

Chair Pruess thanked the Board for their diligence and said they would continue to advocate in support of the PRC priorities, especially land acquisition.

The PRC asked if the Department might look at creative funding options for land acquisition. Director Jones said that the possibility of a land bond is in discussion by the County and further information may be available by the end of the month. The PRC asked for the topic of a land bond be added to the June 11 PRC meeting if information is available.

10-Minute Walk Program

The goal of the NRPA 10-minute walk program is for everyone to have a park within a 10-minute walk. Chair Pruess asked that criteria such as this and other nationally recognized criteria be included in the new master plan.

Director Jones said that the RFQ for the new master plan included many parameters to make sure that we are meeting NRPA standards.

Calendar of Events

- Clarks Creek Community Park Opening Event – May 31, 2019
- Clarks Creek Community Park Opening – Community Event – June 1, 2019
- Briar Creek Greenway from Randolph Road to Meadowbrook – Waiting for bank stabilization work on Briar Creek to be more stable before an opening ceremony
- LSC GW from Huntingtowne Farm Park to I-485 is now open to the public. An opening ceremony will be planned for a future date
- Cross Charlotte Trail: The South Charlotte connector to connect McMullen McAlpine to LSC GW is under construction; plans for Brandywine to Tyvola were delivered last week with the bid going out in June; they are between 95% and 100% construction documents on the section from 7th Street to 10th Street.

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NC Department of Labor (OSHA) Carolina Public Sector Star Recertification

The Department will be renewing their OSHA Star certification between June 25 and June 27.

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation was first awarded the NC Dept. of Labor Public Sector Star in May of 2008 and re-certified in 2011 and 2014 and is now seeking recertification in 2019. Park and Recreation was the first park and recreation department in NC to become certified; the 9th Public Sector site (2008) and there are currently 23 Public Sector Star sites in NC.

CAPRA Visit:

The Commission for Accreditation for Park and Recreation Agencies will be here between June 11 and 14 for the Departments reaccreditation. The CAPRA members will be having dinner with the PRC and staff at 5:30 on June 11, 2019 and will be attending the PRC meeting.

Four-Mile Creek Greenway – City Placemaking Project – Response to PRC Questions

Bert Lynn, Division Director of Capital Planning Services, provided responses to the PRC's questions from the previous PRC meeting on the City Placemaking Project:

- What is the total budget of the project? **Between \$10-15k**
- The crosswalk between the plaza and Starbucks is heavily used and could use a refuge island midway across the crosswalk. **Unfortunately, this project does not have the funding available to make changes in infrastructure.**
- Are there plans to provide additional barricades between the plaza and the road? I noted that have benches in the area now, but one commissioner felt that we might consider this since we are inviting people of visit and sit in the space. **We are not putting additional barricades between the plaza and the road. We of course would be open to it if our budget was higher, but because there is a guardrail and seating there now encouraging people to be there, we don't see this as an issue.**
- What are the other locations for the placemaking initiative? **We are doing 7 City-led projects in total (one in each City Council district), which can be seen here: https://www.charlottenc.gov/civicinnovation/Placemaking_Program/Pages/Placemaking_Projects.aspx Additionally, we have launched a Placemaking Grant and have awarded 10 winners. You can see their projects here: https://charlottenc.gov/civicinnovation/Placemaking_Program/Pages/Placemaking_Grant.aspx**

Bette Rae Event on Saturday May 4, 2019

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Director Jones was not informed but was made aware of and attended a City and West Charlotte Land Trust meeting held at the Bette Rae Thomas Recreation Center with the community to talk about a placemaking location within ½ mile of Enderly Park and the Bette Rae Thomas Recreation Center. Director Jones stated that collaboration with the City is very important when they are making plans that are about parks and the Department is not at the table.

Consent

Motion was made by Commissioner Winiker to approve all consent items, including the PRC minutes of April 9, 2019, which was seconded by Commissioner Loflin and approved unanimously.

PRC Reports and Requests

Commissioner Winiker: Thanked the Department for their participation in the Open Streets 704 event.

Commissioner Martin: Shared that Commissioner Powell was very pleased to see PRC in the audience of the budget meeting.

Commissioner Loflin: Shared his appreciation for the recent new PRC orientation.

Commissioner Penn: The Senior Games were well attended but would like to see more involved.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

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